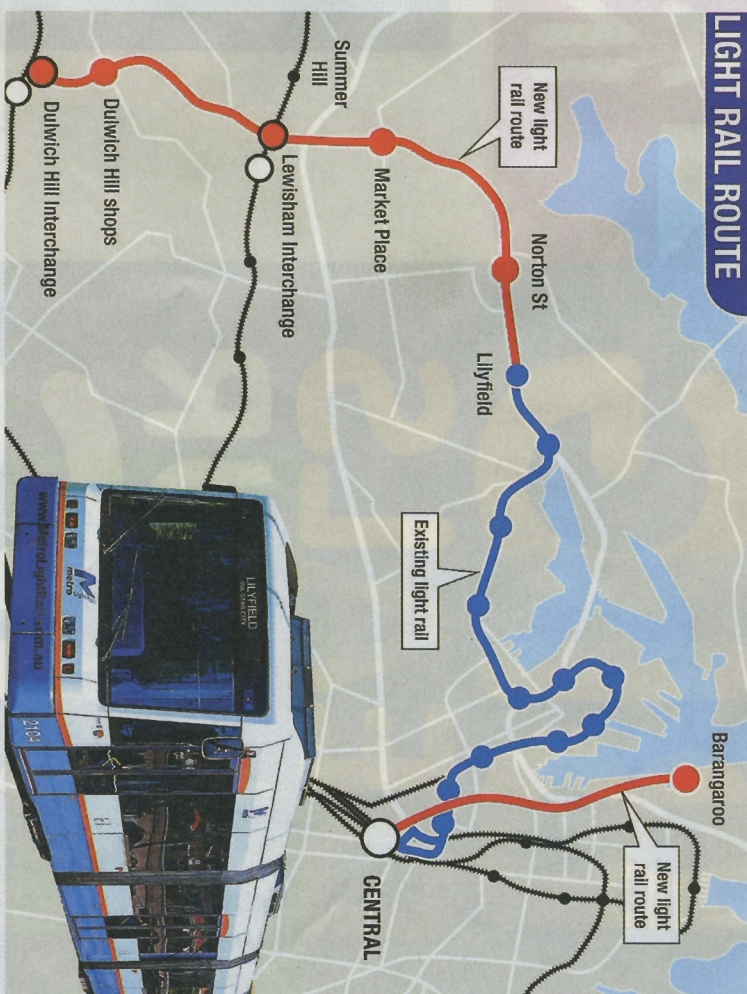




Leichhardt mayor Jamie Parker and Hills Shire mayor Peter Dimbrowsky are happy about the light rail extension, and the light rail route.



Main photo: DANNY AARONS

# Govt goes back to council coffers

Kate Carr

AFTER demanding local councils put up \$140,000 to pay for a feasibility study into the extension of light rail in the Inner West, the NSW Government is now asking councils to put that money toward the environmental assessment of the project.

Premier Kristina Kennally announced last week the extension of the light rail from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, and from Haymarket to Circular Quay as part of the Government's Metropolitan Transport Plan.

State Transport Minister David Campbell said the feasibility study would now be "widened to include pre-construction components such as preparing environmental and planning approvals".

## Consultation and clashing community groups

EcoTransit spokesperson Gavin Gatenby said he was concerned community groups and councils would be left out of the consultation process, now a feasibility study had been dumped.

"No matter how fast the Government moves, there is still an important role for community

groups and local government to play," Mr Gatenby said.

EcoTransit has been involved in a stoush with Friends of the Greenway, which wants a cycleway and bush corridor in the area, over whether the extension from Summer Hill to Dulwich Hill should involve one track or two.

"Planning work on both extensions is to begin immediately, with the view to beginning construction as soon as possible," Mr Campbell said.

He said Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore had agreed to reallocate its \$50,000 contribution to help pay for

the environmental assessment.

"The other councils involved will be asked to do the same," Mr Campbell said.

Sydney Council, however, has denied agreeing to anything of the sort. A spokesperson said that while Cr

Jud Agius from Friends of the Greenway reiterated the group's commitment to a single line extension between

the two stations, a proposition EcoTransit and light rail operator Metro Transport Sydney CEO Kevin Warrell have consistently maintained is unworkable.

Moore and the Premier were discussing ways to work together, no agreements had been reached about specific contributions.

Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville are the other councils involved. Each agreed to contribute

\$30,000 to the initial study. Ashfield Mayor Ted Cassidy said his council had not been expecting to contribute at all now the project was going ahead.

"Council resolved to spend that money on a feasibility study. If the minister wants to direct that somewhere else, he will have to ask us in writing," Cr Cassidy said.

Leichhardt mayor Jamie Parker said given the Government had obviously decided the project was feasible, it should now just get on with building it. "I'm not inclined to pay for State Government responsibilities."



Should local councils help pay for the light rail environmental assessment? Tell us at innerwestcouncil.com.au